private sponsorship of road signs and greening of National Highways, the private entrepreneurs are allowed to depict the name/logo of their company in a sign of specified dimension.

(c) Instructions have been issued to executing agencies for removal of unauthorized hoardings.

Plan outlay for NHs in Assam

1319. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the plan outlay earmarked so far for the National Highways development in Assam as part of National plan;

(b) the number of National Highways under six-laning, four-laning and two-laning with their total lengths and upto date progress report in Assam; and

(c) the completion of phase-I Golden Quadrilateral in North Eastern Region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K. H. MUNIPPA): (a) An amount of Rs. 198.00 crore has been earmarked for expenditure on National Highway works in Assam to be executed through Assam PWD under National Highway (Original) and Special Accelerated Road Development Programme-North East during 2007-08. In addition, National Highways Authority of India and Border Roads Organisation are also incurring expenditure on development of National Highways in Assam, however, their outlays are not State specific.

(b) Details of National Highways under six laning, four laning and two laning in Assam are given below:

Sl. No.	Lanes	No. of NHs	Total Lenegth
1.	Six laning	Nil	Nil
2.	Four laning	5	660.00
3.	Two laning	18	1931.755

Development of National Highways is a continuous process and works are undertaken, from time to time, depending upon necessity and availability of funds. The progress of work is job specific and not necessarily National Highway specific and the works are at different stages of progress.

(c) There is no stretch of Golden Quadrilateral in North Eastern Region.

National drivers' license

1320. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have held discussions with NGOs and State Governments to process a new system of the 'National Drivers, License';

(b) when was this meeting held;

(c) the steps that Government would take to study the concept of a joint venture between Government and State Governments to make available an easy system of issuing licenses all over the country; and

(d) the steps proposed to give priority to this idea?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K. H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) The Licencing Authorities appointed by the State Governments are empowered to conduct driving test and issue Driving Licences to the eligible persons in accordance with the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Rules made thereunder. There is no proposal to study the concept of a Joint Venture between Central and State Governments regarding issuance of Driving Licence.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Retirement age conciliation proceedings

†1321. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the conciliation proceedings pending before Chief Labour Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi for restoring age of retirement from 58 to 60 years; and

(b) if so, the status of the matter as far as the demand made by employees' union in this matter is concerned?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir. The Chief Labour Commissioner [CLC(C)] initiated conciliation proceedings on the issue of raising the age of retirement from 58 to 60 years of the employees of Major Ports on representations received from certain Labour Federations. The conciliation proceedings have not been closed.

On receipt of demands from various Workers' Federations/Unions of Major Ports under the administrative control of this Ministry to increase the retirement age from 58 years to 60 years, this Ministry constituted a Committee under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser of Department of Shipping to look holistically into the whole matter relating to retirement age of Port and Dock employees. The Committee has submitted its report. No decision on the report has been taken.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.